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TAGS: ENRG, ETRD, EALR, UR, GE, HU, PL, GZ, COMECON

SUBJ: SOVIET MINISTER GIVES STATUS REPORT ON ORENBURG PIPELINE
PROJECT

1. SUMMARY - EXPERIENCED SOVIET LABOR APPEARS TO BE DOING
MOST OF FIRST-STAGE WORK FOR CONSTRUCTION OF ORENBURG PIPELINE,
WITH EAST EUROPEANS (GDR, HUNGARY, POLAND, CZECHOSLOVAKIA)
CONCENTRATING ON CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSING AND WORK BASES.
TOTAL NUMBER OF EE WORKERS EXPECTED TO BE AT WORK ON PROJECT
BY END OF 1975 IS ONLY 5,500 AND STATEMENT IS MADE THAT USSR
IS GIVING ASSISTANCE TO EE COUNTRIES AT THEIR REQUEST.

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DESPITE ADMITTED DELAYS IN PIPE DELIVERY AND IMPLICATION OF

MASSIVE PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZATION AND COORDINATION, SOVIETS HAVE SET AMBITIOUS NEAR-TERM GOALS FOR 25TH CPSU PARTY CONGRESS AND FULL OPERATION OF LINE IS STILL EXPECTED AT END OF 1978. LAST-MINUTE SHIFTS IN GOSPLAN INVESTMENT ALLOCATIONS HAVE PROBABLY BEEN MADE TO PUSH PROJECT FORWARD. END SUMMARY

2. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN ORENBURG NATURAL GAS PROJECT, INCLUDING NEAR-TERM OBJECTIVES, ARE REPORTED BY SOVIET MINISTER OF CONSTRUCTION OF PETROLEUM AND GAS INDUSTRY ENTERPRISES, B.E. SHCHERBINA, IN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN PRAVDA NOVEMBER 1. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS, EXCLUDING PREVIOUSLY REPORTED INFORMATION AND UNUSUALLY HEAVY SHCHERBINA STRESS ON SIGNIFICANCE OF PROJECT AS EXAMPLE OF FRATERNAL SOCIALIST UNITY AND BENEVOLENT SOVIET INTEREST IN PROVIDING VALUABLE, INDUSTRIALLY USEFUL SOURCE OF ENERGY FOR EE COUNTRIES.

(A) USSR, AS RESULT OF EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE IN PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION, IS RENDERING ASSISTANCE TO EE COUNTRIES -- AT THEIR REQUEST -- IN CONSTRUCTION OF SEVERAL DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF PIPELINE AND ALSO IN BUILDING SEVERAL COMPRESSOR STATIONS. (COMMENT: CORRECT READING SHOULD BE THAT SINCE EE COUNTRIES UNABLE TO MEET ORIGINAL MANPOWER AND TECHNICAL QUOTAS, SOVIETS ARE DOING MUCH OF THEIR WORK FOR THEM. END COMMENT)

(B) WORK HAS BEGUN ON ALL FIVE SECTORS. THIS HAS INCLUDED DELIVERY AND PUTTING INTO OPERATION OF EXCAVATORS, PIPE-LAYING MACHINERY, AUTOMATIC PIPE WELDING BASES, BULLDOZERS, OTHER EQUIPMENT. TOTAL OF ABOUT ELEVEN MILLION TONS OF EQUIPMENT REMAINS TO BE DELIVERED.

(C) USSR MINISTRY OF GAS INDUSTRY, AS "GENERAL CONTRACTOR" IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARATION OF ALL TECHNICAL DOCUMENTATION AND ALSO "ON-TIME DELIVERY OF NECESSARY EQUIPMENT."

(D) LABORERS AND SPECIALISTS FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POLAND, GDR AND HUNGARY ARE NOW WORKING ON PROJECT. AT END OF THIS YEAR THEIR NUMBER WILL BE MORE THAN 5,500. SOVIET SPECIALISTS, MANY OF THEM WITH LONG EXPERIENCE IN CONSTRUCTION OF PIPELINES IN CENTRAL ASIA AND FAR NORTH, ARE LAYING PIPE IN ORENBURG OBLAST AND UKRAINE. EE SPECIALISTS ARE COMPLETING CONSTRUCTION OF MODERN HOUSING UNITS FOR PRODUCTION AND PIPE-WELDING BASES.

(E) "THE FIRST TENS OF KILOMETERS" OF PIPELINE ARE ALREADY WELDED AND INSTALLED IN TRENCHES. "UNFORTUNATELY, MUCH PIPE IS STILL LYING IN THE PORTS OF LENINGRAD, KALININGRAD, AND IL'ICHEVSK" AND ITS DELIVERY TO THE PROJECT ON SCHEDULE IS NOT ASSURED. "WE NEE URGENT ASSISTANCE FROM RAILWAY AND PORT WORKERS."

(F) IN VIEW OF IMPORTANCE OF ORENBURG PROJECT AND IN HONOR OF TWENTY-FIFTH PARTY CONGRESS OF CPSU, SOVIET WORKERS HAVE DECIDED TO LAY 250 KILOMETERS OF PIPE BY END OF 1975. EE UNITS (HUNGARY, GDR, POLAND, CZECHOSLOVADIA) HAVE AGRRED TO LAY 50 KILOMETERS OF PIPE IN THIRD AND FOURTH SECTORS BY END OF FEBRUARY 1976. IN ADDITION, EE WORKERS HAVE PROMISED (BY END OF FEBRUARY DEADLINE) TO COMPLETE CONSTRUCTION OF TEN BASES FOR PIPE WELDING AND TO SPEED UP CONSTRUCTION OF COMPRESSOR STATIONS AND MODERN HOUSING UNITS IN VOLGOGRAD, VOROSHILOVGRAD, KHAR'KOV, POLTAVA, CHERKASSY, VINNITSA, TERNOPOL' AND ZAKARPATSKIY OBLASTS.

(G) SOVIET ORGANIZATION "SOYUZINTERGAZSTROY" CONTINUES TO PLAY KEY ROLE IN HUGE TASK OF "SUPERVISING WORK OF SPECIALISTS FROM MANY DIFFERENT COUNTRIES." THIS REQUIRES "ESPECIALLY PRECISE COORDINATION." NEW PIPELINE BEING BUILT WITH MOST MODERN TECHNOLOGY INCLUDING NEWEST ANTI-CORROSIVE MATERIALS, DELIVERY OF FULLY ASSEMBLED EQUIPMENT AT SITE, AND EXTENSIVE USE OF AUTOMATIC CONTROLS. USE OF MODERN EQUIPMENT PLUS "WORKER ENTHUSIASM", CLOSE COORDINATION OF PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES, WILL RESULT IN COMPLETION IN 1978. LINE WILL BE OPERATING AT FULL CAPACITY BY END OF TENTH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FIVE-YEAR PLAN.

3. COMMENT - READING BETWEEN THE LINES, IT APPEARS THAT SOVIETS -- MAINLY LABOR FORCE FROM SHCHERBINA'S MINISTRY -- ARE MOVING RAPIDLY TO TRY TO COMPLETE LINE ON SCHEDULE. MUCH OF EAST EUROPEAN INPUT AT THIS TIME APPEARS TO BE CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSINGG AND ASSEMBLY INSTALLATIONS. NUMBER OF EAST EUEOPEAN WORKERS EXPECTED TO BE ON PROJECT BY END OF THIS YEAR IS FAR LESS THAN PREVIOUS ESTIMATES HAVE INDICATED AND REFERENCE TO "SOVIET ASSISTANCE" FOR EE COUNTRIES AT THEIR REQUEST IS, AS FAR AS EMBASSY IS AWARE, FIRST PUBLIC SOVIET IMPLICATION THAT EE PARTICIPATION WILL NOT BE AS PLANNED. COMPLETION BY END OF 1978 WILL BE DIFFICULT TASK AND WE SUSPECT THAT GOSPLAN HAS HAD TO PERFORM

SOME UNUSUALLY HIGH-SPEED SHIFTING OF INVESTMENT ALLOCA-
TIONS TO COVER EAST EUROPEAN DEFICIENCIES.
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